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A
R E V I E W
OF THE
S H O R T H I S T O R Y
O F
PRIME MINISTERS.

[Price Six-pence.]

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R E V I E W
O F T H E
S H O R T H I S T O R Y
O F
P R I M E M I N I S T E R S.

I N W H I C H

The numerous Fallacies and Misrepresentations contain'd in that Pamphlet are fully detected, and some important Passages in History set in a clear Light.

W I T H

Cursory R E M A R K S on the Author's base Aspersions on M—.

*Fallitur egregio quisquis sub principe credit
Servitium; nunquam libertas gratior extat;
Quam sub rege pio.*

Claud,

L O N D O N:

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WILLIAM H. DODD

1860-1910

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IT must be allowed, that since the *Conquest*, there never was an Opposition to any *King*, or any *Ministry*, more indefatigably supported, than that which is at present maintain'd against those who are; and, which is their great *Crime*, have been so long trusted with the *Administration* of publick Affairs. Among the many *Attacks* they have sustain'd, and the Multitude of *Political Mines* which have been sprung against them, none hath so much disappointed their *Antagonists*, as that they have not been able, by the *Examples* quoted from *British History*, to alter the Disposition of their *Prince*, or sufficiently inflame the *Minds* of the *People*; either would have

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open'd them a *Road to Power*, and till that be effected, they are determin'd never to be at *quiet*.

It has been often advanced by the *Advocates* on that side of the Question, *That a continual Opposition against the Measures pursued by any Ministry whatever, is the surest Means of preserving Liberty to the Subject*; and therefore a Practice always justifiable, as tending to the Good of the State. Whether this be so or not, I shall not at present attempt to enquire; but one Thing I will venture to assert, that no Principle but this can ever justify the present *Malecontents*. Nay, I can with Justice go further, and affirm, no *Practice* could ever have done so much Honour to the present *Administration*; since it is manifest, nothing but the *Uprightness* of their *Conduct* could have sustained the reiterated *Assaults* of a *powerful* and *invenom'd* Faction.

That happy *Freedom*, which we enjoy under the best *Constitution* that ever existed, hath opened a wide *Gate* for whatever could be suggested to the *Prejudice* of those in *Power*; I mean, the *Liberty* of the *Press*, which never was strained farther than within these *seven Years* last past. I do not mention this with the least View of setting such a *Practice* in a *Light*, which might make it seem just or necessary to restrain it; on the contrary, I think it essential to the *Nation's Safety*, because it affords them the best

best Means of judging of the *Condition* their *Affairs* are in. And I am the more zealous for the Support of this *Liberty*, from my being persuaded that while the *Majority* of *Britons* remain cool and candid Judges of the contending *Parties* Merits, they will ever continue dutiful Subjects to their *King*, and entertain a proper Sense of that *Happiness* which is derived to them from his *Administration*. From these Considerations, I am a Friend to the *Liberty* of the *Press*; and from these Considerations only, have I on this Occasion been tempted to *employ* it.

That *History* affords the best *Lessons* to *Politicians*, is acknowledg'd by all who have discours'd on the Subject; and that the *English History* ought to be thoroughly studied by *English Men*, was, if I mistake not, a Point tolerably well known before it was *inculcated* by the *Craftsman*. I must own, indeed, that Mr. *D'Anvers's Correspondents* and *Associates* have given us repeated Proofs of their reading in this way; they, in the beginning of their *Lectures*, extracted from it various Characters at full length; such as *Buckingham's* and *Woolsey's*. Afterwards the learned, judicious, and impartial Mr. *Oldcastle* presented us with a Set of *Dissertations* on *Rapin's History*, which were wonderfully applauded by his Pupils; and by others, thought rather *malignious Reflections*, than *Observations* founded

ed on *Facts*. But these *Essays* for reviving *Confusion* proving utterly ineffectual, the *present*, it seems, has been thought a convenient *Season* for a new Attempt in the same way ; and thereupon, some *Under-Author* has been set at work to make and publish an *Extract* of all that could be muster'd up on this Head ; and he has presented it to us accordingly, under the Title of *A Short History of PRIME MINISTERS in Great Britain.*

The Intent of this labour'd Performance, as the *Author* himself sets it forth, is to shew, that a *Monster*, call'd a *Prime Minister*, and who is the *Fore-runner* of *Tyranny* ; or, as it is there express'd (a little obscurely, I think) a *preliminary Tyrant* was, *is*, and *will be* such a *Bugbear*, as the *British Nation* cannot bear the Sight of : That our *Constitution* must tremble at his *Approach*; our *Liberty* be in danger whenever he *appears*; our *Trade* fly before him ; and, in a word, *common Sense* and *common Honesty* must quit the *Kingdom*, the very Instant this same *Prime Minister* sets his Foot in it.
 " Behold, *Britons* ! this tremendous *Mon-*
 " *ster*, which only can swallow up your *Pri-*
 " *vileges* ; remember that he is to be perse-
 " cuted with *universal Antipathy* ; that
 " your Ancestors never gave him *Quarter*."

— Thus far the Author.—Let me add this Caution. Don't fall to worrying, till you're sure 'tis a *Prime Minister*.

It is no difficult thing to perceive, that all the Writer's Artifice is exerted in order to confound the Words *Prime* and *Evil Minister*, so as to make them pass for synonymous Terms; for could that be once brought about, it would require no more than to call any of his *Majesty's Council* his *Prime Minister*, and the Person must, *ipso facto*, commence such a Monster as has been pursued by the Publick State, at least since the Days of *William the Conqueror*: Their late Success in imposing a *Change* in collecting the *Duties* on two Commodities on the People for a general *Excise* has made them so *sanguine*, that they fancy the same may be practised again with equal Facility, and then by the help of this Scheme their Work were done. For all the good People of *England*, as this very learned Gentleman has shewn, are, from an innate Implacability derived from *Father* to *Son*, bound to rise as one Man, and some-how or other rid themselves of this *Monster*; and in case it should so happen, that they should fall into any Dispute about the *Method*, the ingenious *Compiler* of this humane Treatise adds at the end of his Pamplet, a *List of Deaths* for them to pick and chuse out of; and, to solve all Difficulties, has put STURDY BEGGARS down in the Class of EXECUTIONERS, for which those, who of late are grown fond of the *Title*, will doubtless give him *Thanks*.

This judicious Person goes on next to assign the Reasons why the *English* Nation *have, do, and ought* to exert their utmost Aversion against *Prime Ministers*; and tho' I confess, there be no Cause at present for answering this part of his Performance, because I know none to whom in any degree of Propriety that Title can be given; yet I cannot forbear remarking what odd Arguments these People pitch on to prove such Paradoxes as they think fit to maintain for the Amusement of the Populace. "When
 " a Number of *great Men* join (says our Au-
 " thor) they draw with them a large Body
 " of the Nation, and cannot therefore act,
 " but upon Principles that may preserve to
 " *them* their Popularity amongst their Fel-
 " low-Subjects." After extolling this *Form*
 of *Rule* extravagantly: "Reverse (says this
 " wise Person) this noble Prospect, and be-
 " hold the Power of many Ministers shrunk
 " up into the Fist of one ambitious Man."
 " (i. e. a PRIME MINISTER) He can have
 " no personal Interest to draw any Numbers
 " along with Him, and must therefore have
 " recourse to corrupting our *Manners*, in or-
 " der to corrupt our *Votes*." All this I con-
 fess, is a kind of Reasoning not a little with-
 out my Comprehension.

For to a Man of ordinary Judgment, as I take it, it will seem much more probable that a *Junto* of *Ministers*, each having, as the Author supposes, a large personal Interest, and

and a great Number of Dependants closely linked to his Service, should attempt to encrease their Authority beyond legal Bounds, than a single Man without any considerable Strength, and who might thence be rationally expected to act with greater Care and Circumspection. I do not say this as an Advocate for a *sole Minister*, but I advance it by way of Argument, and I could adduce many Instances to prove it: The *Triumvirates* of *Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus*, and of *Oetavius, Antony and Lepidus*, put it absolutely out of the Power of the *Romans* to escape *Slavery*; if these Confederacies had never been made, the Friends of *Liberty* would have been too strong for any single *Pretender*; but their Conjunction riveted the Chain on the People, and what happened afterwards was only changing *Three Masters for One*.

These worthy Reasons for establishing an *Oligarchy* being sufficiently insisted on, our Author proceeds to *ransacking*, as himself very justly terms it, the *British History*, in order to prove by Record the continued *Hatred* of the *Nation* to this *Phænomenon*, which he has thought fit to dress up and call a *PRIME MINISTER*. With what view this Detail has at this juncture been pushed into the World, the Work itself sufficiently declares, and stands in need of no *Innuendoes* to explain it. But the Falshoods, Forgeries, and Misrepresentations which it con-

tains, renders it necessary to examine it particularly ; because honest and good Men may otherwise be mislead, and mistake Kings for *Tyrants* ; *Publick Benefactors*, for *Traytors* to the *People* ; and the most *Pernicious Enemies* to the *State*, for *Zealous and Disinterested Patriots*. With this Intent we shall follow him step by step thro' the several *Reigns* from the *Conquest* to the *Restoration*, and leave our Readers to judge with what Candor he has given them a short Account of the Single Article of *Prime Ministers* through that Period.

But previous to this, it will be needful to settle the true Meaning of those Terms which both he and I make frequent Use of, viz. *Minister*, *Prime Minister*, and *Favourite*. The first, according to its natural Import, means no more than a *Servant*, and in the Course of these Pages is taken for a *Servant* employed by the *Prince* in Matters of *State*, i. e. in discharge of Duties he owes his People. *Prime Minister* is a *Servant*, in whom his Prince, from an high Opinion of his Capacity and Integrity, places a *peculiar Confidence*. A *Favourite* is one raised from the King's Esteem of his *Person*. When these make an ill Use of the *Power* with which they are invested, they become *Evil Ministers*, and *Minions* dangerous to their Master, in as much as they are Pests to his People, and such as, after due Proof of

their

their Crimes, the *English* have hardly endur'd.

WILLIAM the first, surnamed the *Conqueror*, was, as *Rapin*, and the best of our own *Historians* have observed, a Prince of a stern, suspicious and implacable Temper; he raised *Odo*, his Half-brother, to the *Bishoprick* of *Bayeaux* in *Normandy*, and, when he returned into his *Dutchy* after the subduing of *England*, he appointed this *Odo* and another, *Regents* here in his Absence. Their Behaviour during their continuance in Power was correspondent to his own, that is, they squeezed, harrassed, and oppressed the poor *English*, till they made them rebel: The King thereupon returning from *Normandy* speedily quashed those Stirs, but he did not punish the *Regents*; on the contrary, the *Historians* say he approved of all they did; and *Rapin* observes, that if they had not been sure of such Approbation, they would not have acted as they did. But *William* from this time hated his new Subjects, revived the Tax called *Danegelt*, and contrived every method possible to bring them low. About sixteen Years after, this *Odo*, who was now become Earl of *Kent* and, had amassed Wealth enough to aspire to the *Papacy*, caused the greatest part of it to be put on board a *Fleet* at the Isle of *Wight*, and taking with him such *Normans*, as had particularly depended upon him, attempted from thence to sail into *Italy*; but the Winds

Winds proving contrary, gave the *King* time to come over, and at once seize him and all that he had ; which when he had done, he sent him close *Prisoner* to a Castle in *Normandy*, where he continued till the *Conqueror's* Death. The Amount of all this is, that a wicked avaricious Prince put it in the power of his Half-brother, by Oppression, to raise an exorbitant Fortune, in the Enjoyment of which he protected him against the *Voice* of the *Nation*, until he found an Opportunity of seizing all to himself. What this has to do with the present State of Things, let the *Craftsman* or his *Corepondents* make out if they can.

WILLIAM the second (says the Author of the *short History*) was, according to our *Historians*, a Prince of a fierce and avaricious Temper. I admit that and more, for the best Authors agree in making him a *Monarch* of mean Capacity and many Vices ; and yet even this *King*, as our Author allows, might have retained the *Affections* of his *People*. *Rapin* tells us how : " It was observed with Pleasure that he affected to be governed by the Counsels of *Lanfranc*, who was universally esteemed and beloved. It was chiefly the Respect he at first paid this wise *Counsellor*, that filled the English with the hopes of a happy Change in their Fortunes." So that it seems the *National Hate* was not in those early Days bent against PRIME MINISTERS, who were, and

and may be of great *Benefit* to the *Publick* ; but against *Evil Ministers* and *Evil Measures*, which every body allows were proper Objects of Resentment. . But as the *English* were in this Reign in the Interest of the PRIME MINISTER, because a good one ; so their Affection for Change never influenced them as to him. Their kind Wishes attended him while in *Place*, and followed him in his *Retreat*, where he died exceedingly lamented both by the *Normans* and *English*, tho' he was a *Foreigner* by birth. It may seem strange to some, that this *Character* should be omitted in the *Short History*, but those who are acquainted with the Candor usually shewn in *Party Histories* will be at no great loss in finding out the Cause. It is not amazing, that so wicked and irreligious a *Prince* as King WILLIAM the second, who retained neither the Fear of God, or *Regard of Reputation*, should be able from among the Scum of the People to pick up an Instrument of Oppression ; the Person he fixed on was one *Ranulph Flambart*, a Man of mean Birth, whom a little before his Death he made *Bishop* of *Durham*, and of whom we shall have occasion to speak again the next Reign.

HENRY the first was indisputably a great Prince, and as deserving of Reputation as any *Monarch* of his Age. But the Author of the *Short History* has imposed on his Readers as to what he says about him and his Conduct.

At

At the beginning of his Reign his *Title* was very *dubious*, not to say *worse*; the Nation were justly provoked against *Ranulph Bishop of Durham*, the *detested Minister* of the late Prince (as *Rapin* calls him;) and the *Great Council* of the Realm directed he should be *imprisoned*, as we are told by *Matthew Paris*; so that this was really a judicial Act, founded doubtless upon *Proofs* which ought to be brought before any Man is punished. As to *Henry's* governing, as the Author sets forth, without any PRIME MINISTER, it is notoriously false; he was directed by *Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury*, in the Entrance of his Reign; and it was the Wisdom, Integrity, and great Interest of this PRIME MINISTER which kept the *Crown* on his Master's *Head*. But the Author of the *Short History* has invented and asserted another Fact in relation to this *King*; because the Story he tells might be of some use to the Scheme pursued in the Pamphlet, *viz.* That when one of his own *Ministry*, ROBERT Earl of MALLENT, had by his Conduct incurred the *People's Hatred*, he first disgraced him, and then stripped him of his vast Estate: Whereas the EARL of MALLENT lost his own large Fortune for attempting to put WILLIAM CRITO, the Son of ROBERT, Duke of Normandy, elder Brother to the King, in Possession of his *Dutchy*. During the latter part of his Life he ruled, as far as we can learn, without MINISTERS,

or

or at least without any of great Note, except his Natural Children, one of whom, viz. *Robert Earl of Gloucester*, was the Person he of all others depended most upon.

King STEPHEN ascended the Throne by the *Election of the People*, who were influenced thereunto by the *Clergy*, at the Head of which powerful Body was *Henry Bishop of Winchester*, the King's Brother. The Terms however upon which he was admitted to the *Crown*, were the conceding large Privileges to his *Barons*, who swore conditionally, as long as the King maintained his *Promises*, so long were they to maintain their *Loyalty*. Oaths were at that time too frequent, which naturally induced Purjury, by rendring them less heedful of those solemn Assertions. Wherefore, before STEPHEN was well settled, some of the most forward to advance him went over to the Party of MAUD his Competitor, who claimed by an *Hereditary Right*; the Barons turned the Favours the King had done them to his Prejudice, and because he would not satisfy the exorbitant Requests they made, a Spirit of FALSE PATRIOTISM excited many of them to disturb the Publick Peace, to take Arms against a King to whom they were bound by *Oath*, and to plunge their Country into civil Broils and Bloodshed, in hopes of satiating their Ambition and Avarice by Bribes from one or other of the Competitors. *Henry, Bishop of Winchester*, carried over the

Clergy to MAUD's Interest, because his *Brother* would not suffer them to become independent, to raise Sovereignties in the Countries where they resided. This insolent *Priest* summoned King STEPHEN to appear before him, and an *Assembly* of the *Clergy*, to give account of his Actions; this his Brother disdained, but sent *Alberic de Vere*, a famous Civilian, who, as *Rapin* tells us, with great Boldness maintained the Royal Cause against these *Reverend Rebels*. This King is recorded to have had another Favourite, one *William de Ypre*, who, when his *Master* was in Prison firmly supported the little Interest left till the Pride of the *Empress*, who disengaged the *Bishop of Winchester*, put it in his Power to restore his *Master* both to his Liberty and Authority. Such FAVOURITES as these, who asserted the Honour and Safety of the *King* against Male-contents and Rebels, will never sure be condemned by Men of the same Principles with those whom they opposed: For which reason *one* is named and censured without ground in the *Short History*, and the *other* not mentioned at all.

HENRY the second was a Monarch of great Capacity, Courage, and Prudence; he made choice of *Thomas Becket*, a Lawyer of some eminence at the Bar, for his Counsellor, and made great and constant use of his Counsels. *Thomas* affected vast Magnificence, and kept up prodigious Splendour, until

until the *Archbishoprick of Canterbury* becoming vacant, the *King* advanced him to that high Dignity, not doubting but that he would act therein very obsequiously. *Thomas* immediately changed his whole Behaviour, the Royal Favours were forgotten, and the Ambition of setting himself at the Head of a Party against his *Prince*, led this haughty *Prelate* to involve the Nation in great Calamities, wherein the *King* shewed great Meanness in condescending to enter into various Treaties with his *Subjects* and his *Creatures*. At length the Insolence of the *Priest*, and a rash Expression from the *King*, caused the *Archbishop* to be murdered in the *Chancel* of his *Cathedral*. After this, much Diffension ensued between King HENRY and Sons; but *Rapin* takes no Notice of *Becket's* having sown the Seeds, which indeed, I think, not a little improbable; tho', to swell the *Wickedness* of this MINISTER, as he is improperly styled in the *Short History*, this Crime is very confidently laid to his Charge; I say, he is improperly styled a MINISTER, because he resigned the *Great Seal* as soon as he became *Archbishop*, and set up for a *Defender* of the Rights of the Church the Moment he had divested himself of his Office of *Chancellor*; so that on the whole he may rather be ranked among FALSE PATRIOTS, than among EVIL MINISTERS.

As to what the Author of the *Short History* says of the Reign of RICHARD the first, and the insolent Behaviour of the *Bishop of Ely*, I admit it to be pretty near the Truth ; but then I must put the *Reader* in mind, that these Exorbitancies were committed in the Absence of the *King*, and that as ill as the *Bishop* behaved, he was summoned before an Assembly of the *Lords* in St. Paul's Church, and there charged with, and convicted of his Crimes, before he was imprisoned or punished, or so much as his Authority taken away ; so cautious in those Days were the *People of England*, and so tender of stirring without *Cause*.

King JOHN was a Prince, whose Vices, and want of Capacity to govern well, brought him into a State the most deplorable a King could possibly be in. HUBERT Archbishop of CANTERBURY rendered him eminent Services in the beginning of his Reign, settled the Minds and Affections of his People, and at his Coronation made a Speech which gave the King to understand he held his *Crown* from the *Election* of his *Subjects*, and was to be maintained in Possession of it by their *Affections* resulting from his *ruling* according to his *Oath*. After this, the *Archbishop* opposed the *King's Measures*, on which the *Writer* of the *Short History* inserts his Name among those he has dignified with the Appellation of

PRIME,

PRIME, *i. e.* of EVIL MINISTERS. But the Author must have a care of writing at that rate ; for if a MINISTER's thwarting his Master when he is out of Place intitles him to be rank'd in the Records of this worthy Author among PRIME or EVIL MINISTERS, then in his second part, he must give us —, and —, and — as the *Publick Pests* of the *Nation*, during the latter part of his Deceased *Majesty's Reign*. As to the affected Character of JOHN GRAY, the NORFOLK MAN, it is not very just in itself, and if it be intended to throw any Dirt on that *County*, the Historians who have written of this *King* have fully wiped it off; by observing that it was the only Part of the *King's Dominions* where his *Majesty* thought his Person safe; wherefore he chose the Town of LYN for his *Retreat*, secured there his *Treasure* and *Regalia*, and as the Reward of the Loyalty expressed by the Inhabitants thereof, he made it a MAYOR TOWN, and gave them his own *Sword*. So that on the whole, a *Norfolk Man* need not have been particularized on this Occasion with so much Caution. The *Earl of Pembroke*, who was the *Counsellor*, in whom this *King* most confided, who in all the Changes of that unfortunate *Period* for the *English Glory*, was constantly true to his *Sovereign* and to his *Country*, is however

ever omitted in this *Short History*, his Character and Conduct not at all agreeing with the *Design* of that *Work*.

The Reign of HENRY the *third* affords much Matter of Observation to the Writer of the *Short History*. HUBERT DE BURGH, whom he mentions, was certainly an *Evil Minister*, and guilty of Oppressing the People, yet he fell by the King's Resentment solely, who harrassed him exceedingly, and would have put him to Death contrary to *Law*. The *Barons*, tho' no Friends to the *Man*, did not like such a *Precedent*, and therefore took him out of Custody of the King's Servants, until such time as he could answer before his *Peers*, which he did so clearly as to escape, tho' Henry, who wanted Money, forced him to buy his Peace, even after this, at the Expence of *four* of his best Estates. The *Bishop* of *Winchester* was a much worse *MINISTER*, a Man neither of Honesty or Humanity, who practised every mean Thing himself to get Money, and prevailed on a very easy Prince to do the same; yet the *Barons* of this Realm sought not his Removal till they had full Proof of his Extortions, when indeed they refused to come to *Parliament* before the King removed him and his Dependents. HENRY himself was an ill and weak Man, so that notwithstanding these Warnings, he governed afterwards as bad as ever, until at the

length the *Barons*, being able to bear no longer, resolved to free themselves from those Pressures under which they had so long groaned. Their General *SIMON MONFORT*, Earl of *Leicester*, had indeed been raised to Honour and Estate by the *King's* Bounty, but not, as the *Short History* seems to insinuate, from a low and mean Beginning ; for this *Simon* was second Son to the famous *Earl Montfort*, and might have been advanced in *France*, if he had not chosen to dwell here. He married King *Henry's* Sister, was not long in the *King's* Favour, headed that Party which opposed the *King's Evil Ministers*, and, in fighting against those who supported the *Royal Authority*, lost his Life. With what Justice then he is crowded into this *HISTORY* of Prime Ministers, all Mankind may judge ; but the Author was willing to have a large *Catalogue*, variety of *Crimes*, and variety of *violent Deaths*. He seems to have received a double Portion of the *Party's* Spirit, and is never pleased, but when describing the wicked A&ts of *licentious Favourites*, saucily insinuating to M y from former Examples, that Subjects have defy'd, imprison'd, and even murder'd *Kings* on various Pretences, which should warn him—of what—surely, of never having any thing to do with those, who presuming on the *Lenity* of our *Laws*, and the *Justice* of the

the present *Administration*, have dared to throw out such hints of their base and bloody Intentions.

The Reign of EDWARD the first is, by the Author of the SHORT HISTORY, admitted to have been equally glorious for the Prince, and happy for the People : This (as it was natural for him to do) he ascribes to that Monarch's making no use of a *Prime Minister*. As every Man has an equal Right of observing on *historical* Events ; so on considering what *Historians* have written of Affairs under this Prince, I am led to imagine, that another more probable Cause may be assign'd for the Prosperity which King EDWARD, for the most part, enjoy'd : It is this. The personal Reputation which *Edward* had attain'd for Courage and Conduct before his Accession to the *Crown*, render'd him so formidable to the *Barons*, that they were less inclin'd to league and confederate themselves against him, than against his *Ancestors*, whose Dispositions they knew were biassed towards Peace ; which therefore they were for attaining at any rate. The best Authors remark, that he made it his chief Care to keep Things quiet here, sometimes treating the *Barons* civilly, sometimes coarsely, as Things stood at the Time Disputes happen'd. In fine, he was a perfect Judge when to persist, and when to give way,

which

which enabled him by degrees to establish his *Authority* so effectually, as to render it impossible for Conspiracies to be undertaken by the *Malecontents* with any Hopes of Success. This, together with his exact Distribution of Justice, even to the meanest of the People, and a Readiness to undertake whatever might contribute to the *Profit* or *Glory* of the *Nation*, made him the *Darling* of the *Populace*, and the *Terror* of those *Noblemen*, who were otherwise prone enough to throw Things into Confusion. His Vigilance, Power, and great Stock of Glory, made him hold the *Reins* of *Government* without Trouble, and enabled him to leave his *Son* a *Crown* without Dispute or Disadvantage.

King EDWARD the *second* was a Monarch of mean Spirit ; he did not *love*, but *dote* on his Favourites, without just Ground or Reason. GAVESTON he recall'd, not only against the Command given him by his dying Father, but also against his own solemn Promise, ratified by an *Oath*. This Man had Wit, and many genteel Accomplishments ; but he had no Capacity, no Turn for *Politicks*, was hasty and vain-glorious, proud and extravagantly profuse. 'Tis true, he dispos'd of all Employments ; yet, in the main, he was

rather the King's *Minion*, than his *Minister*; for in EDWARD's thoughtless Courts, *Balls* were the *Business*, and splendid *Entertainments* the utmost Stretch of royal *Power* and *Wisdom*. The *Barons*, having by several Experiments discover'd the *Pusillanimity* of their Sovereign's Temper, at last set up a new Form of *Government*, to which the King was forced to submit; and quickly after, pretending he had broke in on some of these Articles, they waged open War against him, taking *Scarborough Castle*, wherein *Gaveston* was, granting him Terms in his Capitulation; which the Earl of *Warwick* afterwards broke through, and put him to Death; an A&t severely animadverted on by *Rapin*. The *Spencers*, Father and Son, soon gain'd as great an Ascendant over King *Edward* as his former Favourite; though at first they were in the *Barons* Interest, and young *Spencer* was by them brought to Court, and placed near the King's Person, as a Spy. It must be acknowledg'd, that these were most unsettled Times, in which Fraud and Dissimulation were scarce thought Crimes. The Constitution differ'd widely from what it is at present; the *Barons* looked on the King as their Enemy; the King regarded them with an *evil Eye*;

Eye; and the poor People stood equally in fear of both. The elder *Spencer* had an exceeding good Character till the Advancement of his Son, and at first gave him good Instructions; but by degrees, too much Power, join'd to that Envy which is sure to accompany it, turned their Brains, and they became insolent to the last Degree. No doubt can be made that the *Barons*, on the first Advancement of the *Spencers*, used them disdainfully, and in a Manner which plainly shew'd, that they consider'd them as Enemies. This provoked the Favourites, who found Means to raise an Army, whereby, the *Barons* being routed, the great Earl of *Lancaster* lost his Life, by a Sentence pronounc'd in the Presence of the *Father* and *Son*. In the mean time, *Isabella* the Queen had an Amour with young *Mortimer*, a Prisoner in the *Tower*, whose Life she protected, though sought by the *Spencers*. Afterwards he made his Escape, and went into *France*, whither the Queen quickly found a Pretence to follow him, with her Son Prince *Edward*: There the Love of the Publick, the Fear of falling again under the Subjection of the *Spencers*, the Thirst of Glory, and a Criminal Passion, prevail'd altogether on *Isabella* to attempt dispossessing her Husband of his

Crown, and revenging herself on his *Minions*. In this she succeeded to her Wish. *Bristol*, where old *Spencer* had fled for Shelter, quickly surrender'd; and he, at the Age of Ninety, was, without Trial, hang'd up in his Armour. Not long after, the *King* himself and the younger *Spencer* fell into her Hands; the latter she caused to be hanged on a very high Gibbet; and soon after *Edward* his Master was basely murder'd. Such a Mixture of *Patriotism* and *Treason*, *Justice* and *Cruelty*, *publick Spirit* and *private Revenge*, hardly perhaps, if ever, appear'd at once in any *Nation*.

It would be needless to trace farther the Current of this Invective against Men in Power; the Remarks which I have already made, are sufficient to shew that the Author had not the Information of his *Readers* in view, but aimed solely at influencing their Passions, and inspiring them with Rage and Hatred against a most *Noble Person*, who, by meer Dint of his Integrity, hath, for a long Course of Years, preserv'd his Honour and his Places, in spite of all the fine Speeches of—and all the tart Papers in the *Craftsman*.

This *Short History*, and all the various *Histories* contain'd in it, have not the

the least to do with the present Times. The *Constitution* is much alter'd since the Reigns of the *Plantagenets*. Our Kings do not pretend to such extensive *Prerogatives*; our *Nobles* are no longer in a Condition to give *Law* to their *Sovereign*, nor to oppress their *Dependants*; the *People* have their just Rights and Privileges, which none can invade except the *Legislature*; and that would be such an extravagant *Act* of *political Self-Murder* as no Man need to be afraid of.

In the many Instances recorded by the *Short History* Writer of ruin'd *Ministers* and *Favourites* cut off by publick *Hate*, there are none mention'd but such as were charg'd with, and mostly convicted of, *Crimes* against the known *Laws* of the Land, as well as against the *publick Safety*. But which way will the designed *Parallel* hold? Has the present M——r, as they affect to call him, ever been charged with any thing in a *legal Way*? Has there been any one so hardy, as to offer an Accusation against him in a Place where he might have been call'd to Account? Have not his Enemies kept continually to *Generals*, and never dared to condescend to *Particulars*, for fear of meeting with a glaring

glaring *Refutation*? If these Men should now, or at any time, succeed, by their insolent Assertions, and overbearing Behaviour towards their *Prince*, would it not open such a *Rent* in our *Constitution* as could not be closed? Who would serve the State in *Prospect* of *Ruin*? Who would aim at doing the *Publick Service*, to be rewarded with their *Hate* as soon as they are satiated with the *Benefits* conferred upon them?

But above all, how hard must the Condition of a *British Monarch* be, if he lose the Power of protecting even his innocent *Servants*? If so be the King's MINISTER must necessarily incur the Hate of his *Subjects*, and expose a worthy Man to the Pursuit of those *violent Spirits* who are in Love with Change, and thirst for Blood, who can Kings expect about them? Or what Consequence can this have, but to make Princes *Tyrants* or *Slaves*?

Men therefore of Moderation, who love their Country, and have a due Respect for the *Crown*, will judge of Things as they appear after due Consideration; they will be warm in the *Interest* of *Liberty*, and yet *loyal* to the Person of their *Princes*; they will disdain

disdain *Slavery*, and still dread the doing the smallest Injury to the *Constitution*; they will respect the King's *Ministers*, while they act in Concert with the *Representatives* of the People. In fine, they will esteem it their Duty to defend a *Government*, while it *protects* them.

F I N I S.



